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ELEKTRA
THE DEADLY ARCHITECT PLOTS MURDER!
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A LITTLE PIECE OF PARADISE

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SHE PRETENDS SHE DOESN'T ENJOY THIS PART.
THE ONE CALLED ANDRE CAN'T CONCEAL HIS OWN HOT PLEASURE.
BADDA BADDA BADDA
I WANT THAT ONE.
SHE WAS ONCE A WILD-EYED ASSASSIN...
BLOFF
DRENCHED IN THE BLOOD OF FURIOUS REVENGE...
OF COURSE SHE'S A COMPLETELY DIFFERENT PERSON NOW.
THAT'S RIGHT, BOYS! I DRIVE YOU CRAZY, DON'T I?
BADDA BADDA
FUDDAFUDDA FUDDA
WELL, YOU JUST KEEP FIRING THOSE BIG BAD GUNS AT ME!
BLAM FDOOM
HEY, SHELLY, SOMEONE AT THE~
~DOOAAARR!
KRASHH
(THIS DUMP'S FALLING APART QUICKER THAN BORIS YELTSIN'S INTERNAL ORGANS!)*
*TRANSLATED FROM THE CYRILLIC.

YOU STILL HERE?
SHE'S CATCHIN' HER BREATH.
HIT HER NOW!
WAIT! ENOUGH OF THIS MINDLESS VIOLENCE!
WE'RE ALL PEACE-LOVING AMERICANS HERE! LET'S TALK!
I AIN'T TOO WORRIED ABOUT LITTLE NINA HERE-- SHE'S WAY TOO APPLE PIESKI.
BUT YOU!
WITH THOSE LOOKS, THAT BODY, THAT MOVEMENT, WE COULD CLEAN UP!
YOU THINK A GIRL LIKE THAT WOULD WORK FOR A CHEESE-BALL LIKE YOU?
JUST THINK ABOUT IT, HUH?
THINK ABOUT IT?
THINK ABOUT EXPLOITING THE DARK, SENSUAL FANTASIES I INSPIRE IN MEN..?
THINK ABOUT PEDDLING MY ASSETS IN THE MARKETPLACE OF FEVERED DESIRES?
SURE.
I'LL THINK ABOUT IT.

ELEKTRA'S APARTMENT...
YOU'LL THINK ABOUT IT? WHAT KIND OF ROLE MODEL ARE YOU?
I'M NOT.
AND I ONLY TOLD THEM THAT TO GET US OUT OF THERE WITHOUT ANYONE ELSE GETTING HURT.
I TRIED TO DRAW BULLSEYE, THE PSYCHO, AWAY FROM YOU BOTH.
I FAILED...
I'M... SORRY.
YOU DIDN'T WORRY ABOUT MY DAD GETTING HURT.
SLUGGING IT OUT WITH THAT PSYCHO IN A PUBLIC PLACE WHERE ANY INNOCENT PASSER-BY WAS LIKELY TO GET HIT IN THE CROSSFIRE!
TRY NOT TO HATE TOO MUCH, NINA.
SORRY DOESN'T BRING HIM BACK.
HE NEVER HURT ANYONE. IT'S JUST NOT FAIR.
IF YOU REALLY WANT TO MAKE IT UP TO ME... THEN TEACH ME HOW TO DO THAT STUFF YOU DO.
THE WORLD REALLY SUCKS, YOU KNOW THAT?
NINA... I CAN'T.
Sniff! AND YOU EASE UP ON THE EASY PLATITUDES.

YOU MEAN YOU DON'T WANT TO?
SAY YOU'LL DO IT, OR I'LL JUMP! WE'RE FIVE FLOORS UP. I'LL BE A MESS. ALL BROKEN BONES AND SHATTERED DREAMS.
SOMETHING ELSE ON YOUR CONSCIENCE.
WE'RE ALL RESPONSIBLE FOR OUR OWN ACTIONS.
I'M GOING TO MAKE SOME DINNER.
IF YOU WON'T TEACH ME, AT LEAST LET ME STAY HERE!
NO.
I CAN'T LIVE WITH MY GRAND-PARENTS. THEY'LL STIFLE ME.
THEY'LL WRAP ME UP IN COTTON WOOL AND THROW AWAY THE KEY!
MY LIFE IS TOO COMPLICATED AS IT IS.
YOU'RE JUST TOO STRESSED OUT, DO YOU KNOW THAT?
A LITTLE FEMALE COMPANY WOULD BE GOOD FOR BOTH OF US.
WE COULD BE FRIENDS.
I TAKE IT THAT WEIRD, DEEP WAY YOU'RE LOOKING AT ME INDICATES I'VE CHANGED YOUR MIND?

GOA, INDIA...
HE SMELLS BAD.
I WANNA PICTURE, ANYWAY.
AND I WANNA GET BACK TO THE POOL.
HEY, MISTER! OPEN YOUR EYES!
IF THESE GUYS ARE SO HUNGRY, WHY DON'T THEY EAT THEIR LOUSY COWS?
IF YOU INSIST.
MORTY!
HOLY COW!
YOU MEAN... I AM NOT ON YOUR TOURIST HIT LIST?
AND TO THINK I AM THE MOST ANCIENT THING YOU WILL HAVE MET ON YOUR TRAGICALLY SHORTENED VACATION.

I AM THE ARCHITECT.
LAST OF THE SHINING ONES.
AAHIIEEE
AS THE TOURISTS DISINTEGRATE...
...THE ANCIENT BEING RE-INTEGRATES.
BACK INTO THE CORE BODY OF A SADHU.
HE IS WEARY.
HIS POWERS WAN.
THE COMPLEX ALIEN STRUCTURE THAT PASSES FOR HIS SOUL...
...CRIES OUT FOR REBIRTH.

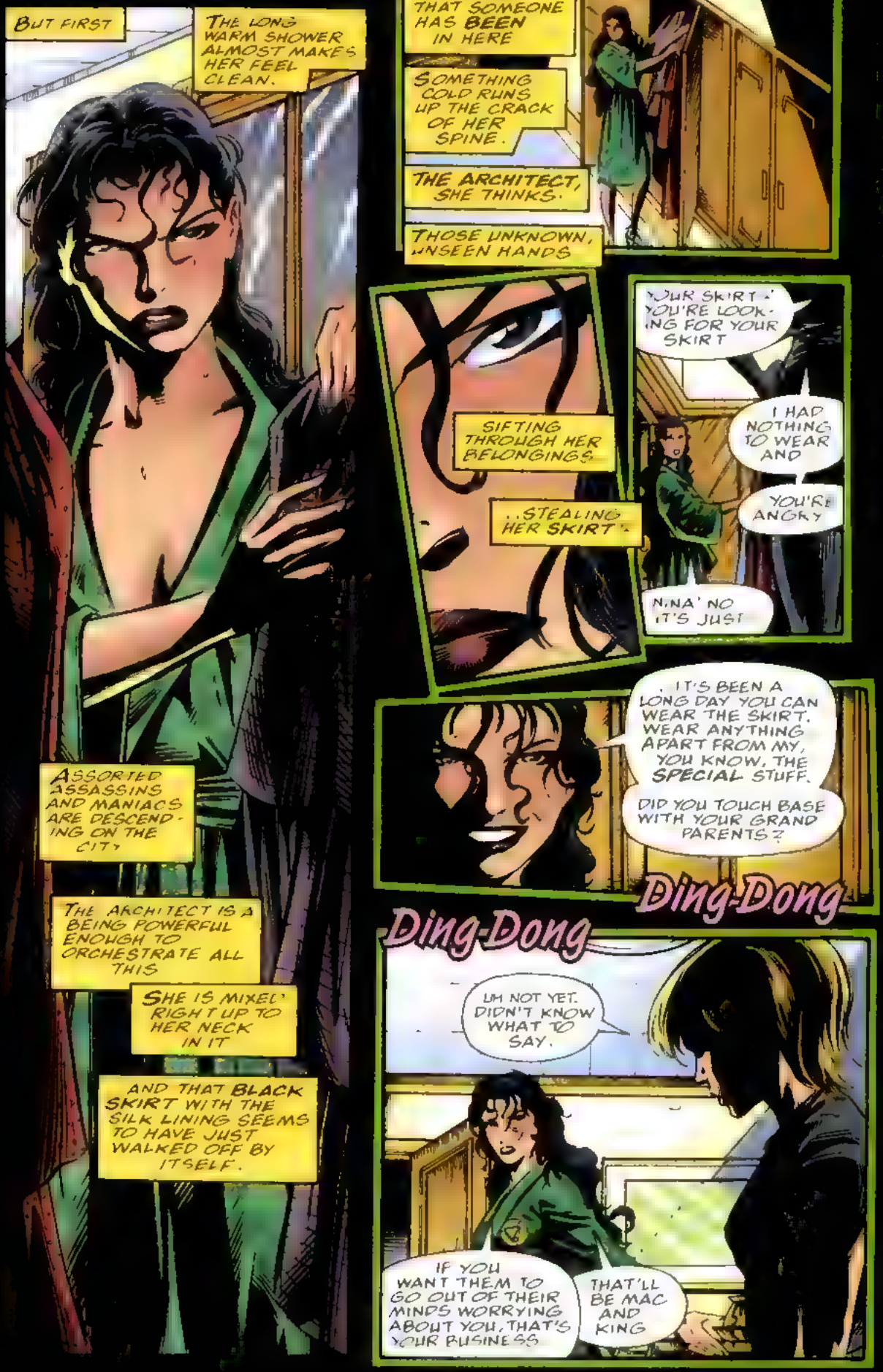
RE-BIRTH.
EVEN NOW, A NEW BODY GROWS IN A CHOSEN WOMB.
BUT FIRST, THIS PRESENT SKIN MUST BE SHED.
THIS WILL NOT BE EASY.
DEATH, AS ALWAYS, WILL BE PAINFUL.
AT THE LAST, HIS ANCIENT SURVIVAL INSTINCTS WILL FIGHT AGAINST DEATH.
WHICH IS WHY THE APPOINTED ASSASSIN MUST BE SPECIAL.
NOW, HIS MIND STRETCHES AGAIN TO THE NEAR-BREAKING POINT...
...ACROSS SEAS AND CONTINENTS...
... AND ENTERS A LATE-NIGHT REVELLER.
UAKKK!
AN ENTRANCE, AS ALWAYS...
AIIEE!
...ACCOMPANIED BY THE FIRE OF TERRIBLE CREATION.
AGHH!
IEEE!

FIRE THAT BURNS.
AND SHAPES A BODY...
...A TEMPORARY VEHICLE FOR HIS MIND...
...IN AMERICA.
AND HE MAKES HIMSELF A KIND OF MAGNET.
DRAWING ELEKTRA TOWARDS HIM.
ELEKTRA, WHO FEELS COMPELLED TO SWING TOWARDS THE EAST VILLAGE...
...WHERE GOOD OLD VIOLENCE AND DESTRUCTION AWAIT HER.
SHE RECOGNIZES ONE OF THEM AS KILLER SHRIKE.
GNGG!
THE OTHER ONE IS NEW TO HER.

DON'T KNOW WHO YOU ARE BUT I'VE TAKEN DOWN BIGGER GUYS THAN
A MUTATED PINEAL GLAND.
AH!
A POISONOUS TELEPATHIC DRILL..
UAHHH!
A SUDDEN DESIRE TO RIP OUT YOUR BRAIN AND SOAK IT IN ICED TEA
FOLLOWED BY A PERFUNCTORY ELBOW TO THE FACE
KRAKK
THAT'S KILLER SHRIKE WELL AND TRULY SHRIKED.
HEY I LIKE YOU I'M SHATTERHEAD YOU GOT A BOYFRIEND? NO? YES? TOO BAD MAYBE I'LL JUST HAVE TO WIN YA.
THAT'S IF I DON'T HAVE TO SHATTER YA FIRST BECAUSE MAYBE YOU'RE NEXT.
WELL, SO LONG AND KEEP TAKING THE GIRL PILLS

SHE HAS HAD BOILING FORK FAT INJECTED THROUGH HER CRANIUM
KILLER SHRIKE WHAT DID DID HE MEAN
THAT'S HOW IT FEELS
MAYBE I'M NEXT FOR WHAT?
I WAS BROUGHT HERE FOR A JOB
HIRED BY A GUY CALLED THE ARCHITECT. TO TAKE OUT SHATTER-HEAD
DIDN'T QUITE WORK
BUT NOW MORE NOISE. MORE SCREAMS. MORE MUSIC OF DESTRUCTION
AS ALWAYS, SHE RUNS TOWARDS THAT MUSIC.
SHAKING OFF THE STICKY REMNANTS OF SHATTERHEAD'S MIGRAINOUS LEGACY
UNAWARE OF THE PALE EYED MAN WITH THE SKIN LIKE CORPSE-MEAT
ANOTHER BLOODY CONTEST.
TWO MORE WOULD-BE ASSASSINS
ONE MORE DEAD LOSER

THE NASTY WIND BLOWING IN FROM THE EAST RIVER MAKES HER WANT TO GO HOME
SHE CANNOT GO HOME
THERE IS A POLICEMAN SHE KNOWS
HIS NAME IS MICHAEL MORRISEY
WHAT'S GOING ON?
SHE DOESN'T LIKE USING THIS MIX OF FEAR AND LONGING ON HIM
SIX BUST-UPS INVOLVING SUPER BAD GUYS THAT WE KNOW OF
THREE BAD GUYS DEAD AND EIGHT MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC KEEPING THEM COMPANY IN HERE TWENTY-SIX MORE IN INTENSIVE.
DO YOU KNOW WHO'S BEHIND IT?
NOT YET
BUT I KNOW A MAN WHO MIGHT.


BUT FIRST
THE LONG WARM SHOWER ALMOST MAKES HER FEEL CLEAN.
ASSORTED ASSASSINS AND MANIACS ARE DESCENDING ON THE CITY.
THE ARCHITECT IS A BEING POWERFUL ENOUGH TO ORCHESTRATE ALL THIS
SHE IS MIXED RIGHT UP TO HER NECK IN IT
AND THAT BLACK SKIRT WITH THE SILK LINING SEEMS TO HAVE JUST WALKED OFF BY ITSELF.
AND THEN SHE REALIZES THAT SOMEONE HAS BEEN IN HERE
SOMETHING COLD RUNS UP THE CRACK OF HER SPINE.
THE ARCHITECT, SHE THINKS.
THOSE UNKNOWN, UNSEEN HANDS
SIFTING THROUGH HER BELONGINGS
..STEALING HER SKIRT.
YOUR SKIRT.. YOU'RE LOOKING FOR YOUR SKIRT
I HAD NOTHING TO WEAR AND
YOU'RE ANGRY
NINA NO IT'S JUST
..IT'S BEEN A LONG DAY YOU CAN WEAR THE SKIRT. WEAR ANYTHING APART FROM MY, YOU KNOW, THE SPECIAL STUFF.
DID YOU TOUCH BASE WITH YOUR GRANDPARENTS?
Ding-Dong
Ding-Dong
UM NOT YET. DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY.
IF YOU WANT THEM TO GO OUT OF THEIR MINDS WORRYING ABOUT YOU, THAT'S YOUR BUSINESS
THAT'LL BE MAC AND KING

WHAT ARE WE DOING TONIGHT? CAN WE GO TO CBGB'S?
YOU PROBABLY KNOW COOLER PLACES THAN THAT
I LOOK OLDER THAN MY AGE. I CAN GET IN ANYWHERE
DO YOU GO DANCING? I MEAN, DO YOU HAVE A GUY AT THE MOMENT?
THERE'S STILL SO MUCH WE DON'T KNOW ABOUT EACH-OTHER.
SORRY NINA
I'M TIED UP.
Hmphh.
HI, GUYS YOU LOOK LIKE--
YEAH WE FEEL LIKE. WHEN BULLS-EYE HITS YOU, YOU STAY HIT.
HOW'S RAT?
STUFFED FULL OF TUBES AND MEDI-CATION NO CHANGE.
HOW'S THE LODGER.

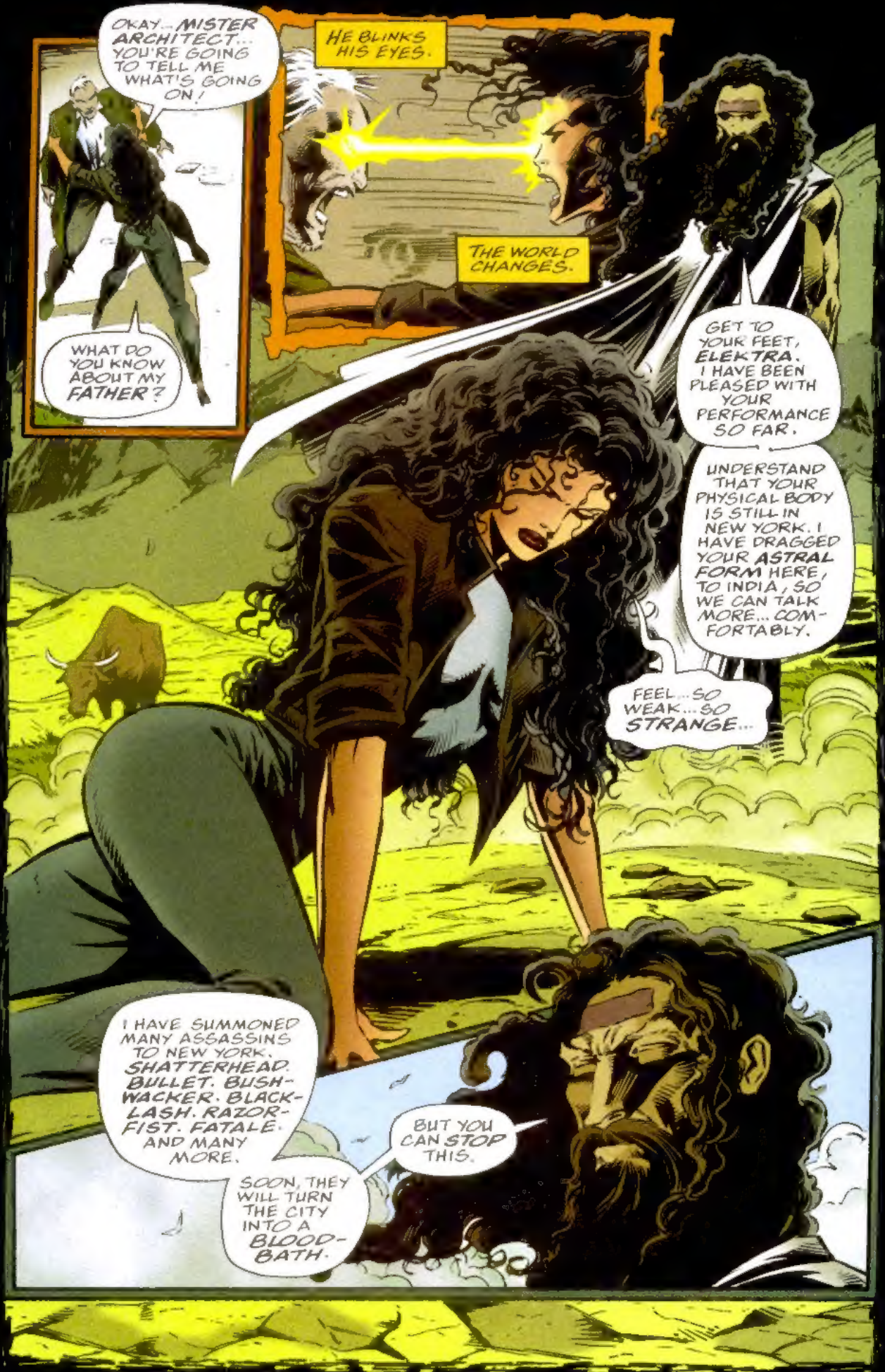
ACTING AS THOUGH SHE'S OVER IT ALREADY.
MAYBE SHE'S TOUGH.
NO ONE'S THAT TOUGH
NINA. THESE ARE MAC AND KING.
McKINLEY STEWART?
THE ONE AND ONLY
WE SAW YOUR FIGHT WITH TYSON.
DAD WAS A REAL.
DAD WAS A REAL FAN OF YOURS.
I THOUGHT YOU WERE OKAY.
I'M DOIN' NOTHING TONIGHT MAYBE I CAN HANG HERE. TALK ABOUT THE FIGHT.
SURE. THAT'LL BE INTER-ESTING.
THANKS, GUYS. I'LL SEE YOU LATER.
YOU TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF OUT THERE.

GREENWICH VILLAGE.
SHE VISITS BOOKSTORES, BARS, COFFEE HOUSES, WHERE SHE WHISPERS HIS NAME...
...TRYING TO INJECT THE RIGHT SENSE OF AWE AND MYSTERY.
AND GETTING SOME VERY ODD LOOKS IN RETURN
WOAAW!
YEAH, OKAY, VERY IMPRESSIVE
NOW PUT ME DOWN
ONLY WHEN YOU TELL ME WHY YOU'VE BEEN UTTERING THE NAME OF DOCTOR STRANGE.
AND UTTERING IT IN A DISTINCTLY CAMP MANNER, I MIGHT ADD.

I DON'T LIKE PEOPLE WHISPERING MY NAME. ESPECIALLY WHEN I'VE HEARD VARYING REPORTS ON THEIR CHARACTER.
HOW LONG AGO WAS IT YOU WORKED AS AN ASSASSIN FOR THE KINGPIN OF CRIME?
DID YOU ENJOY YOUR SPELL WITH THE EVIL AND SECRETIVE ORDER CALLED THE HAND?
HOW. DO YOU... KNOW ABOUT.. THAT..
THERE IS LITTLE THAT ESCAPES MY ATTENTION.
THERE'S NO USE STRUGGLING EVEN YOU CANNOT ESCAPE FROM THIS SIMPLE BUT EFFECTIVE SPE--
~EELLK!
LISTEN, FOR FUTURE REFERENCE.
I AM NOT A GIRL WHO GETS SWEPT OFF HER FEET.
IMPRESSIVE, ELEKTRA
BUT I SIMPLY TURN YOUR SAI INTO A
FRENCH BREAD STICK?
TRULY, THOU ART THE MASTER OF THE OCCULT!
WELL, IT'S BEEN AGES SINCE I DID THE OLD SWORD INTO A SNAKE ROUTINE.
WHAT DO YOU WANT, ANYWAY?
TO TALK BUT NOT HERE.

DOCTOR STRANGE'S SANCTUM SANCTORUM.
IT IS TRUE. I HAVE RECENTLY BEEN AWARE OF A PRESENCE... AN ANCIENT SOUL OR SOUL-SHAPE.
'HIS PRESENCE
COULD IT BE THE ARCHITECT?
POSSIBLE SO MANY OF THESE ANCIENT BEINGS LIKE TO AMASS PSEUDONYMS. IT'S A KIND OF SICKNESS WITH SOME OF THEM
THE TERM YOU USED "THE SPIDER WEB THAT CATCHES THE DEW." THAT WAS SOMETIMES USED BY HASSAN, THE OLD MAN OF THE MOUNTAIN WHO FOUNDED THE ORDER OF ASSASSINS.
HE'D DRUG HIS MEN, GIVE THEM A TASTE OF PARADISE.. AND THEN SEND THEM OFF TO DO THEIR DUTY, WITH THE PROMISE THAT PARADISE WOULD BE THEIRS AFTER DEATH
ASSASSINS! THAT MUST BE IT!
HASSAN WAS A CLEVER BUT MORTAL MAN WHO DIED MANY CENTURIES AGO. BUT I'LL LOOK INTO IT.
IN THE MEANTIME
"YOU'RE ON YOUR OWN, ELEKTRA."

ON HER OWN.
SHE SITS IN A QUIET SQUARE, TRYING TO GATHER HER THOUGHTS.
THERE IS AN OLD MAN NEXT TO HER WHO SMELLS OF...
FIRE. I LOVE FIRE. IT CLEANSES. IT SHAPES...
RIGHT.
I MADE A MODEL OF THE CITY, SEE?
YEAH, VERY NICE.
I PUT A MATCH TO THE MODEL, THUS...
MY GOD!
FIRE!
YOU!
IT'S YOU!


OKAY... MISTER ARCHITECT... YOU'RE GOING TO TELL ME WHAT'S GOING ON!
HE BLINKS HIS EYES.
THE WORLD CHANGES.
WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT MY FATHER?
GET TO YOUR FEET, ELEKTRA. I HAVE BEEN PLEASED WITH YOUR PERFORMANCE SO FAR.
UNDERSTAND THAT YOUR PHYSICAL BODY IS STILL IN NEW YORK. I HAVE DRAGGED YOUR ASTRAL FORM HERE, TO INDIA, SO WE CAN TALK MORE... COMFORTABLY.
FEEL... SO WEAK... SO STRANGE...
I HAVE SUMMONED MANY ASSASSINS TO NEW YORK. SHATTERHEAD. BULLET. BUSHWACKER. BLACKLASH. RAZORFIST. FATALE. AND MANY MORE.
BUT YOU CAN STOP THIS.
SOON, THEY WILL TURN THE CITY INTO A BLOODBATH.

HOW? HOW CAN I STOP IT?
FIRST, LOOK BEHIND YOU.
LOOK BE--
--?!
NO...
IT CAN'T BE!
FATHER?!
PAPA? IS IT YOU?
YES, MY LITTLE ELEKTRA. IT IS I.
HOW I HAVE LONGED FOR THIS MOMENT.
Oh, SO HAVE I. YOU'RE SOLID. YOU'RE REAL! I DON'T BELIEVE THIS IS HAPPENING...
...IT CAN'T BE HAPPENING, BUT--
Shh. LET US JUST ENJOY WHAT TIME WE HAVE TOGETHER.
Oh, PAPA, I MISSED YOU SO!

ENJOY, ELEKTRA. FOR THIS IS NO ILLUSION.
ONE OF THE MANY POWERS I POSSESS...
...IS THE ABILITY TO BRING BACK SHADES FROM BEYOND THE GRAVE.
AND JUST AS EASILY...
...I SEND THEM BACK AGAIN.
Huh?
BRING HIM BACK! THERE WERE... THERE WERE THINGS I NEEDED TO SAY--
YOU WILL SEE YOUR FATHER FOR ONE HOUR EVERY WEEK. MORE THAN THAT EVEN I CANNOT ACCOM-PLISH.
ONE HOUR? YES... YES, THAT WILL BE...
...BUT YOU WANT SOME-THING IN RETURN. WHAT...WHAT DO YOU WANT FROM ME?
ELEKTRA, YOU WILL HAVE ACCESS TO YOUR DEAD FATHER... I WILL CALL OFF THE MANY ASSASSINS CON-VERGING ON NEW YORK, ON ONE CONDITION.
THAT YOU KILL ME!
TO BE CONTINUED!